

# case study: a closer look at **Park Chelsea Apartments**



Golden Dawn (S27-28) Econo, Saxon, Titan • Bermuda Blue (G391) Econo • Toledo Grey (S75) Econo, Titan

## key players:

Architect • Esocoff & Associates Architects  
Mason Contractor • Calvert Masonry, Inc.  
Developer • WCSmith  
Distributor • Capital Brick & Tile, Inc.

## Park Chelsea Apartments • Washington, DC

The 13-story 600,000 square-foot high-rise residential development, known as Park Chelsea, is located in DC's Capitol Riverfront neighborhood. The building brings 429 new residences to New Jersey Avenue, a major corridor that extends from the Capitol Building to the Anacostia River. Its architectural character incorporates the memory of the original industrial neighborhood in which it lives.

Building upon Washington DC's rich masonry tradition, Park Chelsea's imaginative use of brick integrates contemporary details into an imposing, muscular facade. The layering of curved and straight walls adds intrigue, while the building's rich color adds dimension and character, changing according to the sunlight throughout day.

"The brick we chose has a fine mix of color specks – like the pointillist paintings of George Seurat. This results in the

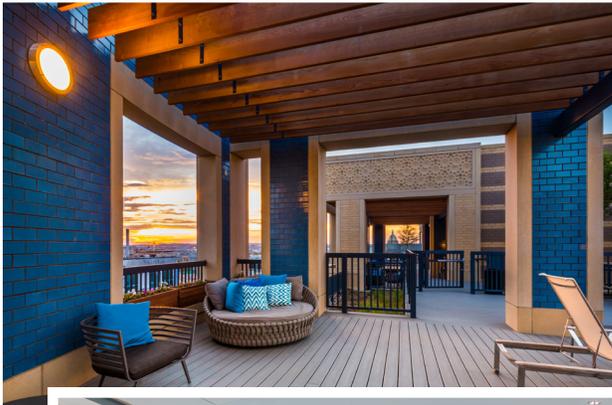
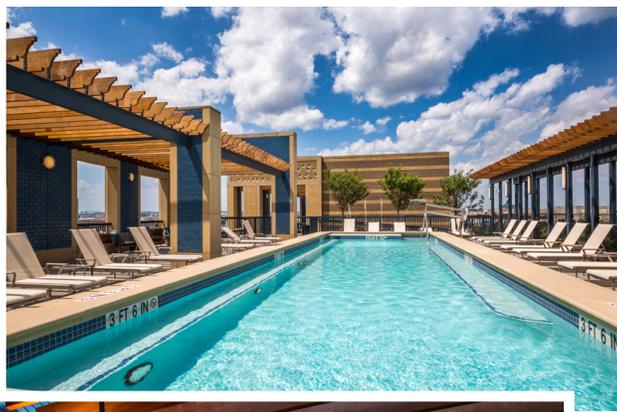
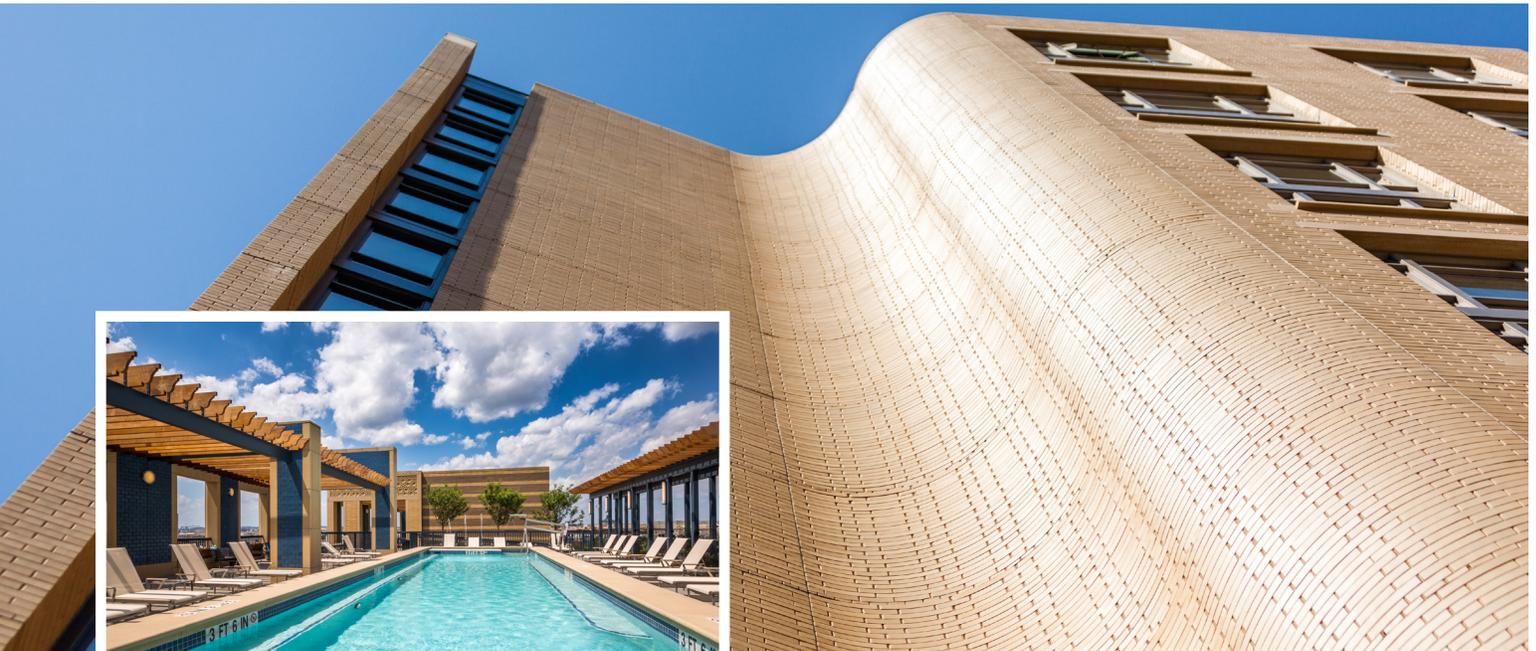
brick varying in color depending on the time of day and by season. That's because the mix of wavelengths in sunlight is variable as the name – Golden Dawn so accurately implies. Visiting the Hanley Plant for this project - as we have in the past – reminded us yet again of the high level of artistry the brick industry's ceramists possess...as always, our expectations have been both high and - successfully met."  
– Philip A. Esocoff, FAIA (now Residential Practice Area Leader at Gensler).

The diversified product line from Glen-Gery enabled the architects to select masonry in three colors, three sizes and nearly four dozen shapes. Through the use of a bonding pattern with alternating courses of 4x16's (Saxon and Titan) and 4x8's (Econo), the brickwork is similar to traditional brickwork bonding patterns. The use of larger bricks, matching mortar, and V struck joints, create a higher

## the brick breakdown:

523,000 brick and 45 shapes

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proportion of brick to mortar than typical of most modern masonry facades. The tight V joint also creates a fine shadow line, allowing each brick to be seen, yet does not distract from the continuity of the buildings curved surfaces.

The curves of the building are achieved through the use of a few special shapes and the careful layout of the 4x8's and 4x16's on a radius that allows the use of a standard brick to achieve the desired result. Wrapping the brick veneer around the free ends of the balconies implies this cavity wall system is the thickness of a multi-width masonry facade. Park Chelsea's overall impression is made substantial by this tailoring of the wall terminations, like lapels on a suit coat.

Park Chelsea's towers features a rooftop pool and lounge/ grilling area, dog exercise area and community gardens surrounded by three types of brick: Bermuda Blue (G391) glazed brick, Toledo Grey (S75) and Golden Dawn (S27-28).

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